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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the teacher's role in elementary and secondary school writing workshops--the teacher as Dostoevskian novelist creates a classroom novel and takes up relations with student-characters. The paper focuses on: the rejection of traditional relations among novelist and character, teacher and student, and the embrace of new ones; how students' freedom is imagined and achieved in writing workshops; and teacher authority and power in the writing workshop. The workshop approach outlined parallels that used by Dostoevsky in his novels: the creation of a world in which multiple voices coexist and interact. This environment, an adventure plot in contrast to traditional classroom plot, encourages freedom in students' writing. By writing students into an adventure story, and by constructing the teacher's role as one of supporting student-adventurers, this workshop approach has provided opportunity and motive for student expression in schools. However, the reflection moment, i.e., the examination, criticism, and reconstsruction of intention, meaning, and value, has not generally been addressed. The teacher's role is to promote this sort of reflection, a reflection adequate to what students' writing expression means in their lives within and without the workshop. The unfettered expression of the student depends on this imposition of reflection by the teacher-as-Dostoevskian novelist who risks sharing everything with student-characters in dialogue. (Contains 39 references.) (ND)

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The Teacher as Dostoevskian Novelist

by

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Introduction

In *Breakfast of Champions*, Kurt Vonnegut (1973) writes himself into his novel as a character. On a dark street among factories and warehouses, Vonnegut hails and introduces himself to one of his one creations, the character Kilgore Trout:

> "Mr. Trout," I said, "I am a novelist, and I created you for use in my books."
> "Pardon me?" he said.
> "I'm your Creator," I said. "You're in the middle of a book right now--close to the end of it, actually."
> "Um," he said. (p. 291)

Trout, of course, thinks that the man confronting him is crazy, and asks if he has a gun. Vonnegut responds that he doesn't need a gun to control Trout, that all he has to do is write something down, and "that's it." When Trout still doubts his power, Vonnegut transports Trout to the Taj Mahal, then Venice, then Dar es Salaam, then the surface of the Sun, and then back to the dark city street with Vonnegut.

Trout collapses, and Vonnegut explains to his creation that although he has broken Trout's mind to pieces in the course of this and other novels, Vonnegut loves him, and wants Trout to experience a "wholeness and inner harmony" that Vonnegut has so far denied him. The Creator explains himself thus:

> I am approaching my fiftieth birthday, Mr. Trout. . . . I am cleansing and renewing myself for the very different sorts of years to come. Under similar spiritual conditions, Count Tolstoi freed his serfs. Thomas Jefferson freed his slaves. I am going to set at liberty all the literary characters who have served me so loyally during my writing career. . . . Arise, Mr. Trout, you are free, you are *free*. (pp. 293, 294)

Vonnegut makes himself disappear, and as he somersaults "lazily and pleasantly through the void" he hears Trout crying out to him: "*Make me young, make me young, make me young*!" (p. 295). But he doesn't.

In this paper, I examine how teaching and the teacher's role in elementary and secondary school writing classes has been conceptualized by leading writing workshop advocates, such as Atwell (1987), Calkins (1986, 1991), and Graves (1983, 1994). To do this, I develop the metaphor of the writing teacher as Dostoevskian novelist. That is, I imagine the teacher as a novelist who creates a classroom-novel and takes up relations with student-characters. A *Dostoevskian* novelist, and not some other sort, because of the instructive similarities and differences between the project Dostoevsky pursued in his novels and the project workshop advocates want teachers to embrace in the writing classroom. At the heart of these projects--and a primary theme of this paper--is the rejection of traditional relations among novelist and character, teacher and student, and the embrace of new ones.

Vonnegut's encounter with his character, Kilgore Trout, suggests just such a change in relations. Vonnegut wants Trout to be free from the purposes his Creator would bend him toward. No longer will Trout be tied to Vonnegut as serf or slave. Workshop advocates are similarly concerned that students be released from the tight control of the teacher, so that they and their writing might flourish. These advocates would have the teacher assert, with Vonnegut (1973): "I'm not going to put on any more puppet shows" (p. 5).

For Vonnegut, however, freeing Trout seems to mean *abandoning* him, severing the connection he had with Trout, rather than transforming the nature and quality of their relations.[1]

This contrasts sharply with Dostoevsky's "method" of freeing his characters, which was based on approaching characters not as objects to be manipulated, but as subjects to be dialogued with. How students' freedom is imagined and achieved in writing workshops is a second important theme in this chapter. I worry about an element of abandonment in the freedom granted workshop students, even as workshop advocates call for humane, respectful, helpful teacher-student relations.

A third theme is teacher authority and power in the workshop. In their writings, workshop advocates have not done well with this theme, in part because teacher power is strongly associated with bad teaching, with the excessive control exerted over students by traditional teachers in traditional classrooms. In addition, student freedom is imagined exactly as freedom from teacher influence. At least two interrelated problems arise. First, workshop advocates often write as if teachers don't move with power in relation to students in workshops. Second, legitimate uses of teacher power are difficult to imagine.

When Trout doubts Vonnegut's power over him, Vonnegut responds that all he needs to do is write something down, and that's it. And that *is* it, as Trout discovers. Trout's freedom, then, is just as much a product of Vonnegut's power and creative design as was his servitude. Similarly, I argue that students' relative control over their own writing in the workshop is a function of teacher design and power. That is, rather than being antithetical to student freedom, teacher power is necessary to assure it. At the same time, the student is always confronted with a teacher who could put his power to different ends. The teacher's control of students is certainly not as complete as the novelist's of her characters, but even the workshop teacher can just write something down--on a detention slip, a report card, a list of ability groups, a request for testing--and, within limits, that's it.

One final introductory note. In what follows, my characterization of Dostoevsky as a novelist is drawn from Bakhtin's (1984a) portrayal of him in *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. I do not criticize or evaluate Bakhtin's interpretation of Dostoevsky and his work--instead, I assume it. Having read Dostoevsky, I can say that, like many others, I find much of what Bakhtin has to say compelling and helpful in coming to a richer appreciation of the novelist's fiction. Here, however, I am interested in the fruitfulness of Bakhtin's portrayal of Dostoevsky and his project--not for making sense of Dostoevsky--but for making sense of teaching and the teacher's role in writing workshops.

A Polyphonic Project

> In the ideal a single consciousness and a single mouth are absolutely sufficient for maximally full cognition; there is no need for a multitude of consciousnesses, and no basis for it. (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 81)

Bakhtin named this ideal, this faith in the self-sufficiency of a single consciousness for "maximally full cognition," *monologism*. It was not Bakhtin's (or Dostoevsky's) ideal. Consolidated and promoted especially during the Enlightenment, monologism "permeated into all spheres" of European culture and became a "profound structural characteristic of the creative ideological activity of modern times" (p. 82).[2] Whether in philosophy or literature or the classroom, a monologic approach assumes that a single perspective is adequate for capturing, for telling the truth about, the world and the people within it. As Bakhtin put it, "Monologue pretends to be the *ultimate word*. It closes down the represented world and represented people" (p. 293).

Monologism closes down the world and people in at least three interrelated ways.

First, under monologic conditions, plurality is rendered superfluous, and difference error. A plurality of meanings and values, a plurality of consciousnesses that perceive and know different things, is superfluous, because what is essential and true is apprehended by the single ideal

consciousness. Whatever is not selected for inclusion is dispensable, unworthy of attention. And with the assumption that the ultimate word can be (or has been) spoken by a single mouth attached to the ideal single consciousness comes the implication that different words from different mouths must be wrong--difference is error. If you have the truth, you don't need or want anything else.

Second, monologism supports hierarchical relations between those assumed to know the truth and those who don't. For Bakhtin (1984a), monologism

> Knows only a single mode of cognitive interaction among consciousnesses; someone who knows and possesses the truth instructs someone who is ignorant and in error; that is, it is the interaction of teacher and pupil . (p. 81)

Bakhtin's criticism of the monologic novel emphasizes the subordination of characters and their voices to the novelist. Instead of diverse characters being the source of diverse points of view, they function to support and elaborate a single worldview, a single ideological position--that of the novelist. In his introduction to Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Booth (1984) notes that monologic novelists

> Never release their characters from a dominating monologue conducted by the author; in their works, characters seldom escape to become full *subjects*, telling their own tales. Instead they generally remain as objects *used* by the author to fulfill preordained demands. (p. xxii)

Substitute "teacher" for "author" and "students" for "characters," and we have the essence of workshop advocates' critique of traditional writing classrooms. In traditional classrooms, students are trapped within the dominating monologue of the teacher.[3] They seldom escape this monologue to tell their own tales. Instead, their voices are subordinated to the preordained demands of teacher questions, assignments, tests.

A third way monologism closes down people and the world, then, is in this reduction of human beings to objects. This reduction, this reification, is accomplished both in the dismissal of what diverse peoples and individuals might know and speak, and in the subordination of these people to those assumed to know the truth. Consider the story told by Graves (1994) to suggest the origins of his approach to teaching writing. Graves reports that he experienced his "most traumatic failure" when, as a senior in college, he tried to use his honors thesis on Tolstoy's *War and Peace* to explore and make sense of experiences and problems then confronting him--the death of a close friend in Korea, being drafted, conscientious objection. If writing the thesis afforded Graves some insight and comfort, the reading his professor gave it did not.

> The professor wrote a cryptic response: "Please change your typewriter ribbon--D+." The only other marks on the paper highlighted thirty-six errors in grammar and punctuation (there were actually many more he didn't circle). He made no response to the content--my struggle with death, conscientious objection and the death of my friend. I felt humiliated and defeated. The Dean put me on academic probation. (p. 9)

Graves goes on to write that he "built a teaching career on that horrendous event" (p. 9).

For Graves, when his college teacher ignored the content of his paper, he ignored and dismissed Graves himself. The questions, the struggles, the particulars that made Graves who he was at that time were superfluous. It seems only his deviations from convention, his errors, were worthy of attention and response. In the process, he was dehumanized, reduced to an object of teacher evaluation and administrative sanction.

Dostoevsky rebelled against exactly this sort of dehumanization in his novels. For Bakhtin (1984a), the "struggle against a reification of man, of human relations, of all human values" was

the "major emotional thrust of all of Dostoevsky's work, in its form as well as its content" (p. 62).[4] Against this reification of humans and human relations within monologism, Dostoevsky pursued what Bakhtin called *polyphony*:

> *A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels.* What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a *plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world*, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. (p. 6)

In contrast to the monologic novel, then, the polyphonic one features a *plurality of voices* and view points. Furthermore, these voices *interact* with one another, and not in ways that subordinate some to others. The authority of the author's voice is *decentered*, distributed among voices with "equal rights and each with its own world." Each of these points--on the plurality of voices, their interaction, and the place of the novelist in the work--deserve additional comment.

When novelists talk about their work, they often report that their fictional characters seem to take on a life of their own within the process of producing a novel. There seems a certain wonder at this magic, as well as a gratefulness for the help (whatever the source) in making a certain character an interesting one. At the same time, the character's relative independence sometimes seems to become a source of exasperation, to become a problem: the writer has a story to tell, needs cooperative characters to tell it, and a particularly lively character is resisting.

Thus, when Vonnegut (1973) is on his way to meet his character Kilgore Trout, he is first confronted--unexpectedly, according to Vonnegut--by another of his creations: Kazak, a "volcanic" Doberman pinscher who, the novelist tells us, was a leading character in an earlier version of *Breakfast of champions*. In that earlier version, Kazak was taught that "the Creator of the Universe wanted him to kill anything he could catch, and to *eat* it, too," which Kazak tried his best to do each night as he prowled the supply yard of the Maritimo Brothers Construction Company (p. 285).

Just before Vonnegut and Trout are about to meet, Kazak springs at Vonnegut from behind a pile of bronze pipe. Luckily for Vonnegut, Kazak's attack is blocked by a fence enclosing the supply yard, and, except for a rather extraordinary self-inflicted injury,[5] Vonnegut walks away from his encounter with Kazak unscathed, and lives to admonish himself thus: "I should have known that a character as ferocious as Kazak was not easily cut out of a novel" (p. 286).

In the end, Kazak was not cut out of the novel, and he rebelled against his Creator. For Bakhtin (1984a), one of the distinguishing aspects of Dostoevsky's work was that he created characters who were not "voiceless slaves," but "*free* people, capable of standing *alongside* their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him" (p. 6). Dostoevsky creates characters with "fully valid voices" that are not subsumed or captured under a "single authorial consciousness." Characters may, for monologic novelists, take on a life of their own under their creator's pen, but they will be used for elaborating the monologic novelist's worldview--they will ultimately be disciplined to the requirements of the novelist's story. For Dostoevsky, the character's task is exactly to articulate her own world view, and this articulation--along with the articulation of other, diverse voices--is not in conflict with Dostoevsky's plan, with the story he would tell. It *is* the plan, the story:

> The entire artistic construction of a Dostoevskian novel is directed toward discovering and clarifying the hero's discourse, and performs provoking and directing functions in relation to that discourse. . . . The "*truth*" at which the hero must and indeed ultimately does arrive through clarifying the events to himself, can essentially be for Dostoevsky only *the truth of the hero's consciousness*. (pp. 54, 55)

The "provoking and directing" functions of Dostoevsky's creative design are often achieved through placing the voices of characters in contact, in interaction, with each other. That is, a hero's truth emerges and sounds, not as the result of some inward exploration of ideas within an isolated, private psyche, but in dialogue with others' truths. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's ability to orchestrate and represent these encounters is grounded in how Dostoevsky, as a novelist, approached and related to his characters--not as objects to be talked about, but as subjects to be talked with.

We will be exploring this dialogic relation in more detail as we proceed, but for now, I want to highlight one key aspect of it--a certain reciprocity of information, that Dostoevsky shared what he knew and said about the world and his characters *with his characters*. And because of this sharing, his characters were put in a position to respond to their creator, to agree and disagree with the truths Dostoevsky expressed about the world and the characters themselves.

In other words, Dostoevsky denied himself a privilege embraced by monologic novelists, what Bakhtin calls "authorial surplus." Put simply, "authorial surplus" points to the novelist knowing more than his characters. For Bakhtin, the monologic novelist hoards great stores of authorial surplus, and uses that surplus to pronounce monologic words about the world and characters he has created.

To show how this works, Bakhtin (1984a) analyzes a short story by the monologic Tolstoy, and imagines how it might have been rewritten by the polyphonic Dostoevsky (Tolstoy may have freed his serfs, as Vonnegut said, but for Bakhtin, Tolstoy never freed his characters). Bakhtin emphasizes how Tolstoy refuses the main characters of "The Three Deaths"--a noblewoman, a coachman, and a tree--access to the truths and meanings of the other characters's lives and deaths. The characters are connected externally, by being in the same place at the same time, but any internal connection, a "connection between consciousnesses," is denied them. Consequently, the lessons they might teach each other, as well as opportunities to embrace or reject these lessons, are kept from them.

> The noblewoman sees and understands only her own little world, her own life and her own death; she does not even suspect the possibility of the sort of life and death experienced by the coachman or the tree. Therefore she cannot herself understand and evaluate the *lie* of her own life and death; she does not have the dialogizing background for it. And the coachman is not able to understand and evaluate the wisdom and truth of his life and death. All this is revealed only in the author's field of vision, with its "surplus." The tree, of course, is by its very nature incapable of understanding the wisdom and beauty of its death--the author does that for it. (p. 70)

The final word on the lives and deaths of his characters, the ultimate word on who these characters were and what their lives meant, then, falls not with the characters, but with Tolstoy. Tolstoy's authorial surplus denies his characters the chance to make sense of, question, and challenge the judgements and evaluations made about them by the monologic author.

In the Dostoevskian rewriting of this story imagined by Bakhtin, the characters would be put into interaction with each other, and confront the others' truths and what these truths meant for their own. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky wrote his novels in the form of a "great dialogue, but one where the author acts as organizer and participant in the dialogue without retaining for himself the final word" (p. 72). Dostoevsky does not reserve a privileged place for himself from which to *talk about* his characters. When Dostoevsky offers descriptions and evaluations of characters--through the voice of a narrator or another character--these judgements are made available to the characters, are brought to the characters' consciousnesses, and the characters have a chance to respond, to say yes, maybe, no, to what has been said about them. In contrast to the monologic novelist, Dostoevsky does not assume the privilege to say the final, objectivizing word about a given

character--at a minimum, the character can say no to that word--and consequently, the character's future remains open, unfinished. And for Bakhtin, it is this open-endedness, this unfinalizability of human consciousness--its potential to learn, respond, rebel--that is its essence. An essence Dostoevsky respects and represents in his approach to characters in his novels.

That his characters speak with strong, "fully valid voices," that Dostoevsky does not take a privileged position in relation to these voices, does not mean that Dostoevsky has no position within the novel, or is inactive within it. Dostoevsky's characters' relative independence, their freedom from monologic words that determine them once and for all, is an aspect of Dostoevsky's creative design, just like the subordination of characters is an aspect of the monologic novelist's plan. The voices of Dostoevsky's characters can show themselves, be created, only with the intense, continuous dialogical activity of Dostoevsky.

> A character's discourse is created by the author, but created in such a way that it can develop to the full its inner logic and independence as *someone else's discourse*, the word of the *character himself*. As a result it does not fall out of the author's design, but only out of a monologic authorial field of vision. And the destruction of this field of vision is precisely a part of Dostoevsky's design. (p. 65)

The novelist moves with power in relation to the character in both monologic and polyphonic novels. The question, then, is not whether the novelist does or does not exert control, but to what end the novelist's power is put. In the monologic novel, the novelist's power is used to create a single worldview, praised and elaborated by the subordinate voices of subordinated characters. In the polyphonic novel, the novelist's power is used to create multiple, conflicting worlds embodied in the voices of diverse characters. The novelist's power is used to develop, as much as possible, the "inner logic and independence" of *an other's* voice and perspective. Or, as Bakhtin put it: "The issue here is not an absence of, but a radical change in, the author's position" (p. 67). And that radical change is in the service of the destruction of a single, dominating, monologic worldview.

In contrast to an impoverished and deadening monologism, polyphony suggests great riches and liveliness, suggests the telling and sharing of truths suppressed in monologic settings. Workshop advocates have glimpsed this richness, this potential, as have we who are attracted to these approaches. Imagine the typical school cafeteria, with students in line to receive the homogenized food, while teachers watch over them, making sure that the students receive and eat this food in an orderly fashion. Then imagine a grand pot-luck banquet with students bringing their favorite dishes from home to share with others, as teachers direct the placement of pots and bowls on tables here and there. The students and teachers can be heard laughing, sometimes even shouting, "Try this" and "Oooh that's too hot." Imagine a space, in school, alive with the sights, smells, tastes, feels, sounds of a plural world.[6]

Workshop approaches and Dostoevsky share a critique of dehumanizing social relations under conditions of monologism. And in response, workshop approaches take up a similar project in the classroom to the one taken up by Dostoevsky in his novels: the creation of a world in which multiple voices coexist and interact. In what follows, I explore how Dostoevsky and workshop approaches pursue the project of polyphony. I emphasize two aspects of Dostoevsky's and workshop approaches' "method." The first is the radical change in position mentioned above--a change intended to promote dialogic relations among novelist and character, teacher and student. The second is the appropriation of the "adventure plot" as part of Dostoevsky's and workshop approaches' creative design.

Following and Freeing the Adventurous Child

For Bakhtin (1984a), Dostoevsky effected a "small-scale Copernican revolution" (p. 49) with his decentering of the novelist's authority in his novels. That is, rather than be the center around which his characters must revolve, Dostoevsky positioned himself as a planet among planets, and interacted with them on the same plane. A similar decentering move is suggested by workshop advocates when they ask the teacher to write with her students and to see herself as a member of a classroom community of writers where everyone teaches the craft of writing to everyone else. But the shift in the teacher's position is suggested most forcefully in a maxim from Graves (1983): *follow the child* (p. 103).[7] The workshop teacher will not dominate classroom discourse. Instead, the teacher will follow the child's lead, will watch and listen carefully for ways to support the child in his written expression.

> You want to teach. You want to help children create and take pride in their work, just as you have. You see teaching as another kind of authorship, which encourages students to express what they know. You observe them on the playground and overhear them talking. You sense the stories and ideas embedded in a single written line. You witness their expressive potential and help them realize their own intentions. You say to yourself, "This is why I want to teach." (Graves, 1994, p. 4)

Note that Graves calls teaching a "kind of authorship" that encourages students to "express what they know."[8] In contrast to traditional, monologic ways of proceeding in classrooms in which the content of students' lives is ignored and devalued, we see here workshop commitments to the everyday, the prosaic, as worthy of attention and writing. Furthermore, students would not be bound to the purposes for writing a teacher might impose, but instead allowed to "realize their own intentions."

Workshop teachers, however, are supposed to do more than just allow students to express themselves. They are also to help students develop and clarify that expression. In grander language, Bakhtin (1984a) describes the parallel activity of Dostoevsky in relation to his characters, and links the success of this activity to the dialogic relationship Dostoevsky takes up with them:

> Dostoevsky's authorial activity is evident in his extension of every contending point of view to its maximal force and depth . . . . And this activity, *the intensifying of someone else's thought*, is possible only on the basis of a dialogic relationship to that other consciousness, that other point of view. (p. 69; my emphasis)

Workshop teachers seek to intensify each individual student's expression, and they do this by following the child, attending closely to the stories and ideas of children, and helping them make their expression and writing processes more effective. Indeed, the teacher's role extends beyond helping the student manipulate material already at hand. For Graves, the teacher is also trying to see the *potential* "embedded in a single line." In her interactions with students in classrooms, in observations of them on the playground and after school, the workshop teacher gets a sense of the possibilities for expression that individual children bring to the workshop. Again, we can affirm and enrich this workshop vision of the teacher's activity with Bakhtin's words on Dostoevsky:

> He heard both the loud, recognized, reigning voices of the epoch . . . as well as voices still weak, ideas not yet fully emerged, latent ideas heard as yet by no one but himself, and ideas that were just beginning to ripen, embryos of future worldviews. "Reality in its entirety," Dostoevsky himself wrote, "is not to be exhausted by what is immediately at

> hand, for an overwhelming part of this reality is contained in the form of a still latent, unuttered future Word." (p. 90)

The "voices" Bakhtin evokes here are not primarily individual ones, much less the voices of individual children. Rather, they are the "social voices" of diverse groups of people expressing diverse ways of making sense of the world. But, for now at least, no matter.[9] The workshop teacher senses the unuttered future words of individual students, hears those ideas not fully emerged, supports the development of worldviews "just beginning to ripen." We might even note the resonances with Dewey's (1980) hopeful story, in *The school and society*, of classrooms and schools as embryonic democratic communities. And this is why workshop teachers teach: Not to enforce their own worldviews on children, but to help them develop and clarify their own ways of making sense of the world and their places within it.

The workshop teacher, however, is not only responsible for participating in dialogues with children. The teacher is also responsible for creating the context within which these dialogues, as well as dialogues among students, take place. Below, I conceive of this context as an adventure story. In order to free student-characters from the stifling restrictions of the traditional school plot, the teacher-as-novelist writes them into an adventure story. Within that story, the student-characters pursue their interests and come to express themselves in a rough-and-tumble mix of people and ideas.

For Bakhtin (1984a), Dostoevsky rejected the traditional and respectable modes for plotting stories in his day because these plots trapped characters in tightly-defined social roles or positions, and in tightly-determined sequences of events that would not allow them to engage in dialogue, would not allow for their humanness, their ideas, to be expressed and heard. Within such plots,

> The hero is assigned to a plot as someone fully embodied and strictly localized in life, as someone dressed in the concrete and impenetrable garb of his class or social station, his family position, his age, his life and biographical goals. His *humanness* is to such an extent made concrete and specific by his place in life that it is denied any decisive influence on plot relationships. It can be revealed only within the strict framework of those relationships. (p. 104)

Within such a strict framework, dialogue is largely impossible, and openness, possibility, are squelched by the tightly-scripted lives of characters. We can draw analogies between characters in such plots and students in traditional classrooms and schools. Although workshop advocates do not take it up, we might, with the help of writers such as Bowles & Gintis (1976), Bourdieu & Passeron (1977), and Willis (1977), note schooling's contribution to the reproduction of social inequality in society, and call traditional schooling a plot in which a person's social position or category determines her relations with the institution and the people within it. In the traditional school plot, the humanness or uniqueness of the individual has no decisive influence on how the story turns out--schools serve society by sorting and classifying students according to what sort of "character" they are, as determined by "the concrete and impenetrable garb" of their race, class, gender, age.

Within the classroom, teacher and students within the traditional plot take up dominant and subordinate roles, and students compete with each other for grades. Lesson plans script the motion and talk of participants, and within these lesson plans, the sequence of teacher question, student response, and teacher evaluation repeats over and over (Cazden, 1986). It is within these "strict frameworks" that teachers and students reveal themselves as human beings to each other--which means that they don't, much.

Dostoevsky and workshop advocates embrace an adventure plot, then, in order to free characters and students from tightly scripted lives.[10] The adventure plot is not driven by pre-

determined roles and conflicts. Instead,

> Problems dictated by [the hero's] eternal human nature--self-preservation, the thirst for victory and triumph, the thirst for dominance or for sensual love--determine the adventure plot. (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 105)

The workshop student is involved in an adventure plot in at least two senses. As regards her writing, the student is encouraged to treat her own life as an adventure worth writing down. That is, workshop advocates emphasize writing grounded in students' own experiences and desires. Graves (1983) wants teachers to help students find "hot topics" with a "strong root of personal experience or affect" (p. 263). And Power (1995) notes that Calkins (1991), in *Living between the lines*, embraces an image of the child writer as a confessional poet who writes primarily about feelings and personal trauma. The problems and joys of being human are to be thematized by children, with children themselves determining the topics and stories to be taken up. Like the fictional hero within the adventure story, the workshop student's own intentions and experiences drive what happens within the workshop.

If the student's life outside the workshop is viewed as an adventure, her life within the workshop can also be so imagined. Not only are the child's intentions for writing freed within the workshop, but also her movements and associations. Dostoevsky's appropriation of the adventure plot helped him place his characters in "extraordinary positions" that exposed and called out their voices, their worldviews. The workshop functions similarly for the student: In contrast to the traditional classroom plot, the workshop-as-adventure-plot "connects him and makes him collide with other people under unusual and unexpected conditions" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 105). In other words, the student's social position, as student, does not exhaust who he is within the workshop, nor does it dictate his interactions with the world and others.

In the more fluid, contingent environment of the workshop, the student's interactions with the teacher and other students are not strictly and externally prescribed. The child can collaborate in writing a story with peers, get help from the teacher with a particular writing problem, seek out response to a draft or final copy of a story from classmates. For workshop advocates, the opportunity to take up alternative relations with the teacher and peers supports the child's development as a writer. The child's voice emerges out of the chance to write out of her own experiences and desires, and to talk about them with others.

One final comment on plot in Dostoevsky's fiction and writing workshops. Bakhtin notes that Dostoevsky's characters are not only *not* trapped in their social positions or biographies, they are also not trapped in a linear, tick-tock time.

> Dostoevsky makes almost no use of relatively uninterrupted historical or biographical time, that is, of strictly epic time; he "leaps over" it, he concentrates action at points of crisis, at turning points and catastrophes, when the inner significance of a moment is equal to a "billion years," that is, when the moment loses its temporal restrictiveness. (p. 149)

Similarly, workshop teachers attempt to loosen the "temporal restrictiveness" of regular school time, where students' bodies and attention are directed not by engagement but by the bell (Lofty, 1992). That workshops provide students with *time to write* is a particular emphasis of Graves (1994). For Graves, writing can be considered an act of self-hypnosis: "I leave the external world in order to visit an interior world of memory, where I search the various caves of experience and recollection" (p. 120). In providing students time to write, then, workshops provide an escape from the press of a plodding, numbing school time. Workshops provide students with a precious resource--time to reflect upon, identify, articulate the inner significance of their personal experience.

Like Dostoevsky, workshop teachers use the loosening of linear time to concentrate action in the workshop on points of crisis, moments saturated with significance and meaning, turning points. How so? As noted above, workshop students are to focus their attention on "hot topics" and to write personal narratives grounded in strong feelings, personal trauma. The writing workshop concentrates action on points of crisis and turning points, then, in the sense that children are to explore and expose, in their writing, such moments in their lives.

Furthermore, workshops are set up to wait for, encourage, and support that moment, that *turning point*, when the student finally finds that "hot topic" worthy of exploration and exposition. I say "finally" because Graves (1983) admits that not every topic taken up by workshop students will be a hot one. He estimates that one topic of four or five will be hot for any given student, and that in a class of twenty-four, "only five or six will be writing on "hot" topics at any one time" (p. 28). As for the rest: "The rest put in their time, hoping for a breakthrough" (p. 257).

I have always appreciated the fact that Graves says this explicitly--it helps those of us who use workshop approaches feel less inadequate when things don't go so hot. But I would add that, for me, his and other workshop advocates' books suggest implicitly--in the examples of children's writing selected for inclusion, in their descriptions of workshop life and their prescriptions for teacher and student activity--that children's writing will actually be hot most of the time. Both imagined and enacted workshop worlds, then, like Dostoevsky's fiction, concentrate action on the charged experiences and breakthroughs of their adventurous heroes.[11]

In sum, the teacher-as-Dostoevskian novelist embraces an adventure plot to create a space, a context, within which student-characters are free to live and reflect upon and tell stories about an adventurous life. Within this space, students escape the strait-jackets of social position and institutional time, pursue their desires, mix with other adventurers, express their own unique worldviews. Within this space, the teacher abandons his monologue and follows the child, takes up new, supportive relations in order to encourage, amplify, intuit the beginning, whispered, unuttered future words of the next generation.

It's a good vision, a worthy one. And now we look closer. For even as this vision clarifies certain aspects of the workshop teacher's role and relationship with students, it blurs others. Below, I play with three meanings of "follow the child" to explore how this workshop maxim mystifies meaning-making, power, and responsibility in the workshop. And I pursue what the workshop attempt to free children from the constraints of social position and time might mean for their writing and learning. Beware: The adventure plot might be a trap.

Following and Fettering the Abandoned Child

Let's begin with the meaning of "follow the child" suggested by "I don't follow you" or "Your meaning is hard to follow." In reading Graves' (1994) *A fresh look at writing*, I was struck with how transparent he assumes children's writing to be. It seems that making sense of students' texts is always a relatively easy thing to do, if you have dedicated yourself to following the child. That is, if you are looking for spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors, you will not follow the meaning. But if you are looking for the meaning, you will find it.

Inasmuch as workshop advocates have incorporated research on children's writing development, made the teacher a student of the student and her writing, and organized writing conferences as places where students help the teacher understand what they are pursuing in their writing, this confidence is not wholly ungrounded. In my teacher education courses, for example, I have watched whole worlds of children's sense-making open up for future teachers as they read and discuss research on invented spelling. But workshop advocates have largely ignored at least two sources of difficulty in following the child's meaning.

First, a healthy body of literature documents the trouble teachers and students often have in following each other because of differences in culture, especially as these differences are expressed

in language use.[12] A widely cited example is Michaels' (1981) account of how a young child named Deena was frustrated in her attempt to tell a story during sharing time. For Michaels, Deena and her teacher, Mrs. Jones, ran into difficulties because they brought different sharing styles to sharing time--Deena a "topic-associating" style with links to African American culture, and Mrs. Jones a "topic-centered" style tied to European American culture. The result was that Mrs. Jones had difficulty following Deena, and therefore had trouble respecting and seeing the potential of what Deena was trying to do. And this in contrast to her success in following and supporting the expression of children who brought a topic-centered style to sharing time.

Second, workshop advocates have not confronted the fact that students, at times, will not want their teachers to follow their meaning. I remember a story a fellow educator told me about an elementary school in which the decision was made that teachers should use writing workshops to teach writing. Fairly quickly, however, administrators and teachers became concerned about the violence, and especially the killing, being represented in their students' writing. So a rule was made that there couldn't be any more killing in the stories students wrote. Soon, all over the school, fictional characters were getting "tapped" left and right. Tap, tap, tap. Imagine the writing conference in which the teacher, seeking clarity, asks what "tapped" means. Unless the child wants to rat, rat, rat on himself and his classmates, he'll have good reason to frustrate his teacher's desire to follow his meaning. For if the teacher follows his meaning, he's in trouble.

In this example, the first meaning of "follow the child" shades into a second, more troubling one, where "follow the child" suggests keeping him under surveillance, keeping an eye on him in order to control him.[13] One of the definitions of "follow" in my dictionary is "to pursue in an effort to overtake"--the "followed" student, then, may experience the close attention of the teacher, not as supportive and liberating, but as intrusive, coercive, maybe even threatening.

Consider McCarthey's (1994) story of Anita, an 11 year old girl in a 5th/6th grade writing class in New York. Anita's teacher, Ms. Meyer, was inspired by Calkins' (1991) discussion of writers' notebooks to have her students keep notebooks of their own. When it came time for Anita to write a piece from her notebook, she thought that she might write about her experiences at camp. Her teacher, however, worried that such a topic lacked impact and focus, that Anita would be unable to write about these experiences with the sort of powerful, personal voice workshop advocates call for. After an examination of Anita's notebook, Ms. Meyer thought that material concerning Anita's relationship with her father could be developed into a strong piece, and she encouraged Anita to write about that.

Ms. Meyer was in good workshop form. She carefully read Anita's notebook, and tried to help Anita identify a topic--within the realm of Anita's own experiences--worthy of Anita's attention and effort. She didn't demand that Anita write about her father, but did *encourage* her to do so.

Now Anita had a problem, for she didn't want to write about her father. Anita hadn't spelled it out in her notebook, and Ms. Meyer didn't know: Anita didn't want to write about her father because he physically abused her and her brother. But how can she not write about this hot topic and still please her teacher, Ms. Meyer? And if she doesn't want to tell Ms. Meyer about her relationship with her father, she can't even reveal her real reasons for avoiding this topic.

Eventually, Anita came up with a fairly ingenious solution to her writing problem. She wrote about someone who was close to her, but not abusive--her grandfather. This allowed her to fulfill Ms. Meyer's seeming desire that she write about her relationship with an important person in her life, without exposing certain facets of her personal life to public scrutiny.[14]

Let me draw one moral from this story: encouragement is sometimes not far from coercion in the classroom, given unequal power relations among teachers and students. The institutional authority of the teacher in school does not just go away when that teacher chooses to engage in alternative teaching practices such as writing workshop; it remains for the student to negotiate with the teacher, or work through, or (as in Anita's case) work around.

As I noted in my introduction, workshop advocates don't attend much to teacher power and authority in the writing workshop--teacher power is something that bad teachers wield in traditional classrooms. In workshops, teachers assist children who--as Graves (1983) asserts with the first words of *Writing: Teachers and children at work*--"want to write" (p. 3). Children *want* to write, so there is really no need to remember that schooling is compulsory, and writing compulsory in the workshop. Workshop teachers *help* these children who *want* to write, so there is no need to worry about how teacher power haunts the "paradoxically intimate yet formalized relationship between teacher and student (always shadowed by its hierarchical and institutional context)" (Murphy, 1989, p. 175).

One of the strengths of imagining the workshop teacher as a novelist is that it makes teacher power harder to ignore. For we think of novelists as moving with power in relation to their characters, as creating and controlling them, as writing them into roles within a larger creative design that determines who they are, how they act, what they will be. The roles that workshops offer student-characters *are* different from those offered in traditional classrooms. Workshop student-characters enjoy an expanded control over the topics, purposes, audiences, and processes they will take up in their school writing. This expanded control, however, does not escape or transcend the teacher-as-novelist's plan, nor does it escape the larger context of schooling. Rather, the students' expanded control is part of the plan. In other words, students don't escape teacher power in the workshop, they confront a teacher power pursued with different means and toward a different end.

What end? My initial answer was the rejection of monologism, the embrace of polyphony. But it is time to reevaluate how well workshops, and especially the role they imagine for teachers within them, live up to the demands of a polyphonic project. We'll begin by pointing to a third meaning of "follow the child," where "follow" suggests accepting the authority of the child. More bluntly, that the teacher should efface herself, bow, before the child.

This may seem an odd direction, given the preceding discussion of teacher power in the workshop. However, as a maxim for teacher conduct, "follow the child" simultaneously enables and disables teacher power in relation to students. The disabling aspect comes in workshop advocates' fears that teachers will interfere in the meaning children are trying to make. That is, traditionally, teachers have not been reluctant to tell students what they should think and believe. Workshop advocates' response to this problem has been to restrict the conversations that are to take place around children's texts to questions of *technique*, *craft*, to how *effective* a given text is, given the intentions pursued by its author, given the meanings he is trying to make. The new and improved relations between workshop teacher and student are supposed to support, as Murray (1985) put it, "professional discussion between writers about what works and what needs work" (p. 17). As for the intentions students are pursuing with their texts, as for the meanings and points of view and voices they are giving voice to, these are to be *left alone*. These are to be followed by the teacher, accepted, assumed in the technical work that follows of making student expression more effective.

In previous work (Lensmire, 1993, 1994), I have written about some of the problems that following the child--in this last sense of supporting and submitting to the intentions and meanings of student writers--creates for both teachers and students in workshops. For example, should the teacher really help a student make his textual attack on another student more effective? And what of racist, sexist, classist points of view expressed in student texts? Here, however, I focus on two ways that the dialogic relations imagined by workshop advocates diverge from the dialogic relations taken up by Dostoevsky with his characters--divergences that undermine the workshop's polyphonic project.

First, as I noted earlier, a key aspect of Dostoevsky's relations with his characters was that Dostoevsky shared what he knew and thought about the world and his characters with the characters themselves. This sharing of what was normally the monologic novelist's surplus vision enabled Dostoevsky's characters to understand their own points of view and senses of themselves

against the dialogizing background of other voices and truths. Workshop teachers, however, are not supposed to do this sort of sharing with their students. According to workshop advocates, teachers are to share what they know about writing as a craft, about how to go about writing and working a text so as to make its meaning clearer. As for the worlds and identities students create with their words, these are to be answered--not with questions, not with other world- and identity-evoking words--but with silence.[15]

Surely I am being too harsh here. After all, workshop advocates want teachers to share adult-authored literature with children, and want the workshop to overflow with the oral and written texts of children and teachers. The workshop is a place rich with the voices of children and adults.

Granted. But if you look at the interactions workshop advocates would have children take up with this abundance of texts, you see that they are all modeled on the third sense of follow the child. That is, the meanings and values expressed in these texts are to be ignored, left unexamined and unquestioned. These texts are to be read, not for what they might show us about the world and ourselves, but for what they might teach us about writing more effectively. In terms of my original discussion of polyphony, workshops feature a plurality of voices, but the intense interaction of these voices--the great dialogue--is greatly subdued. With help from Dewey (1983), we might imagine children's stories as dramatic rehearsals of ways of being and acting in the world, as first moves that would be answered with other stories, questions, criticisms, in a rich deliberation on what is and what could be, as well as on the powers, responsibilities, and pleasures of writing. Workshop advocates call for no such deliberation; indeed, their admonition to follow the child actually undermines it.

A second difference, then, between the dialogic relations within Dostoevsky's project and those within writing workshops, is the conception of freedom these relations imply. The freedom of Dostoevsky's characters is based on their chance to respond to others' words about them and the world. That is, their freedom is achieved, not through isolation, but through engagement. Dostoevsky's characters are given access to other voices and points of view, and with that access, they can further develop their own ideas and resist being trapped by the words of others. In the end, the freedom of Dostoevsky's characters is grounded in their capability to say their own word about themselves:

> A living human being cannot be turned into the voiceless object of some secondhand, finalizing cognitive process. *In a human being there is always something that only he himself can reveal, in a free act of self-consciousness and discourse, something that does not submit to an externalizing secondhand definition.* (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 58)

I do not doubt that workshop advocates hope to help children resist second-hand definitions and speak their own words about themselves. Given the lack of deliberation built into the workshop about these words, however, it seems that children's freedom in the workshop is to be achieved more by leaving them alone than by engaging them in dialogue with others. In the name of not interfering in children's meaning-making, we may abandon them to it--free to express whatever they already are, but not helped to escape it.

What, then, of our adventure story, given the trouble covered by "follow the child"? Does it have a happy ending?

Bakhtin (1984a) thought that Dostoevsky's "extraordinary artistic capacity for seeing everything in coexistence and interaction"--his ability to represent characters who were alive in the moment of dialogue with others, unpredictable, not determined by their pasts--was his greatest strength. Bakhtin also thought (though he does little more than assert it) that this greatest strength was also Dostoevsky's greatest weakness: "It made him deaf and dumb to a great many essential things; many aspects of reality could not enter his artistic field of vision" (p. 30).

What cannot (or at least has not) enter(ed) workshop advocates' field of vision? Their adventure story attempts to help students escape history. That is, the workshop context is intended to free students from the bonds of social position and institutional time, so they can be free to pursue their interests and interact with the world and others in unconventional ways. However, inasmuch as this attempt at escape involves denials of development, culture, and power, it may actually trap students in history, rather than help them struggle with and against it.

I say denial of development despite the fact that workshop advocates do tell stories of children's writing development. But these stories and the morals workshop advocates draw for us are always concerned with the development of skills, writing processes, with helping workshop teachers help students craft more effective texts. Left unexamined are the meanings and values students are developing within their texts, and how we, as educators, might support the ongoing construction and reconstruction of those meanings and values. To put the point differently: The workshop's adventure story focuses attention on breakthroughs to hot topics. In the absence of deliberation about those hot topics--in the absence of dialogue and work that extends beyond consideration of technique--the development of students' ideas of self and the world is neglected.

I say denial of culture, because workshop advocates have not recognized the ways that the voices and selves students bring to the workshop are bound up with the cultures they inhabit and that inhabit them (Dressman, 1993; Lensmire, 1995). Thus far, workshop advocates have focused attention on the individual child and the individual child's "unique territories of information" (Graves, 1983, p. 22), as if children are not caught up in the meanings and values of family, community, peers. Ironically, the exclusive focus on the individual--as separate, unique--child may actually undermine the workshop teacher's efforts to respect and follow that child. In order for Michael's (1981) Mrs. Jones to respect Deena, she must "recognize" her, which, for Taylor (1994), would involve knowledge of and respect for the cultures Deena draws on in creating her self and her voice. This is not to dispute the importance of teachers knowing and caring for students as individuals. But by not recognizing culture and its links to student identity, workshop advocates put at risk one of the adventure story's supposed benefits--rich, supportive interactions among teachers and students.

Finally, I say denial of power, not only because of the denial of teacher power in the workshop as discussed above, but also because workshop advocates have not confronted what the ongoing struggles over meaning and value by powerful and less powerful groups in society might mean for the teaching and learning of writing in schools. Delpit (1995) reminds us that "ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, ways of interacting" are wrapped up not only with culture, but also with power, and that schools reflect the "culture of power." Furthermore,

> Success in institutions--schools, workplaces, and so on--is predicated upon acquisition of the culture of those who are in power. . . . The upper and middle classes send their children to school with all the accoutrements of the culture of power; children from other kinds of families operate within perfectly wonderful and viable cultures but not cultures that carry the codes or rules of power. (p. 25)

Rather than just follow children, Delpit would have teachers tell children about the "rules of power," the societally-valued ways of communicating and presenting the self. Not because these valued ways are more worthy, but because they are the coin of the realm. Some children come to school with this coin in their pocket. Others will need to work in school to add it to the currency they bring with them from home--a currency declared devalued by powerful groups able to make such declarations. Delpit would have teachers risk embracing teacher power to tell children about the world so that they might be better prepared for it and defend themselves against it. She would have teachers be Dostoevskian novelists, and take up the challenge of sharing what they know, in order for their student-characters to be able to resist the second-hand definitions of others and speak their own word about themselves.

This is where the workshop adventure story begins to look like a trap, a set-up, and the supportive, caring role imagined for the workshop teacher less supportive, less caring. We grant children a certain agency within the context of the workshop--by allowing children's interests, desires, experiences, to guide their own and teacher's work--but this agency might make it less likely that they gain access to resources they need to move with agency and power outside the workshop. Thus, Delpit asks that the teacher's work within the workshop be held responsible, not only to how it contributes to the ongoing activity of the workshop, but also to how it participates in the larger contexts of school and society. Or, to draw on the devastating example Burke (1989) used to make the point that moral action must be read, interpreted, "identified" against the backdrop of larger and smaller contexts:

> The shepherd, *qua* shepherd, acts for the good of the sheep, to protect them from discomfiture and harm. But he may be "identified" with a project that is raising the sheep for market. (p. 186)

Conclusion

So where does this leave us? Certainly with more work to do imagining and revising the teacher's role and teaching in the workshop. I can suggest the general direction of this work with reference to Willinsky (1986), who characterized the challenge confronting workshop teachers as somehow bringing together the

> Opposing moments of art and education, providing opportunity and motive for unfettered expression and then the imposition of reflection upon it. (p. 13).

By writing students into an adventure story, and by constructing the teacher's role as one of supporting student-adventurers, workshop approaches have done quite well with the challenge of providing opportunity and motive for student expression in schools. Willinsky's "opposing moment" of reflection has been addressed only to the extent that children and teachers are to take up conversations about the effectiveness of student texts for given intentions, given meanings and values. The examination, criticism, and reconstruction of intention, meaning, and value--these have not been addressed in the books meant to support workshop teachers in their work with children.

The responsibility for promoting this sort of reflection cannot fall, ultimately, with students; this is what Willinsky signals, I think, with his "imposition of reflection." The imposition of reflection on student expression--a reflection adequate to what this expression *means* for their lives within and without the workshop--will be the action of the workshop teacher taking up her power and responsibility on behalf of the voices of her students.

For the opposing moments of art and education are not, ultimately, opposing. Rather, the unfettered expression of the student depends upon the imposition of reflection, on the teacher-as-Dostoevskian novelist who risks sharing everything with his student-characters in dialogue. To not risk this dialogue, this engagement--to interpret "unfettered" as freedom from constraint rather than power to do--is to join Vonnegut in abandoning Trout to his old age. Only we will be abandoning children to their youth.

Notes

[1] Vonnegut (1973) writes, for example: "I think I am trying to clear my head of all the junk in there--the assholes, the flags, the underpants. . . . I'm *throwing out* characters from my other books, too" (p. 5; my emphasis).

[2] Given that Bakhtin (1984b) celebrates the Renaissance in *Rabelais and his world*, the Enlightenment can be conceived of as a time of loss--especially of the heightened sense of the relativeness of any single perspective or language. A similar story is told by Toulmin (1990) in *Cosmopolis*, where philosophy is put on the path of sterility in the Enlightenment with the loss of concern for the oral, particular, local, and timely.

[3] Freire (1970) writes of the "narration sickness" of traditional teaching.

[4] The sentence continues: "under conditions of capitalism" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 62). For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky correctly recognized how the "reifying devaluation of man had permeated into all the pores of contemporary life, and even into the very foundations of human thinking." But Bakhtin also thought that Dostoevsky did not understand the "deep economic roots of reification" (p. 62). A similar observation is made by Berlin (1988) about writing workshop advocates guided by what he calls an "expressionistic rhetoric." Berlin argues that these advocates are admirably concerned with individual agency and dissent, but that they do not understand how dissent and agency are actually threatened within a capitalist society.

[5] Here, I follow the lead of my high school anthology of world literature.

While reading excerpts from Voltaire's *Candide* in this anthology as a high school junior, I got to the part where a young princess who has been unconscious awakes on the beach to find a moaning eunuch running his hands about her body. At exactly this point in this English translation of the narrative, the text shifted to Italian (I think) to represent the eunuch's words. I didn't usually read footnotes in high school, but I did this time, and found in the footnotes that the eunuch was complaining about not having any testicles. Oh my.

When Vonnegut (1973) catches sight of Kazak leaping toward him out of the corner of his eye, and before he has even had time to consciously register the danger, his body prepares for fight or flight. At this point in the novel, Vonnegut writes a page or so of technical description of the messages to glands, the hormones secreted, the bodily responses to this threat. He reports:

> Everything my body had done so far fell within normal operating procedures for a human machine. But my body took one defensive measure which I am told was without precedent in medical history. It may have happened because some wire short-circuited or some gasket blew. At any rate, I also retracted my testicles into my abdominal cavity, pulled them into my fuselage like the landing gear of an airplane. And now they tell me that only surgery will bring them down again. (p. 289)

This happens just when Vonnegut is on his way to free Trout, and I continue to wonder if Vonnegut is suggesting that, in freeing his characters, he is emasculated. Is he suggesting that the novelist who doesn't have control of his characters is less of a man/novelist? And if we decide he is suggesting this, what might this mean for our explorations of the teacher as novelist?

I tried discussing this incident and these questions with colleagues at an informal presentation of my ongoing work on this paper and the larger book of which it is a part. Their responses--mostly stony silence, but also the giggling of a few of my friends--suggested that I

adopt my high school anthology's strategy of putting such things in a footnote. Sorry that I don't write Italian.

6 One problem with this metaphor, as I've developed it here, is that it suggests that what children bring with them from home and community--languages, ways with words (Heath, 1983), stories--are always already finished and not in need of work, development, reconstruction. Rather than already-prepared dishes brought to school to share, then, we might imagine children bringing what they had to school--Moll et al. (1992) would have educators help them bring it--and the feast being prepared there.

7 Workshop and whole language advocates have suggested the teacher's new position in the classroom in a number of ways; for example, teacher as exemplar, or coach, or cheerleader (see Willinsky, 1990, p. 204). I have chosen to focus on "follow the child" because, for me, this maxim best captures what we would want to affirm about workshop conceptions of teaching. However, with some work, it can also be used to help us understand some of the limitations and problems with workshop conceptions.

8 Graves (1994) does not develop the idea of teaching as authorship here (or elsewhere, to my knowledge). He does, however, talk about writing and teaching as twin crafts that "demand constant revision, constant reseeing of what is being revealed by the information in hand; in one instance the subject of the writing, in another the person learning to write" (Graves, 1983, p. 6).

9 Only for now, because this easy appropriation of "voices" as individual voices will eventually get us into trouble. That is, workshop advocates' nearly exclusive focus on the individual--as separate, unique--child ignores how children's voices and selves are bound up with the social voices of home, community, peers. I take this up later in the paper (see also Lensmire, 1994, 1995).

10 This is not to suggest that Dostoevsky only used an adventure plot to free characters. Other appropriations included dream stories and aspects of Menippean satire and carnival.

11 Not that I was necessarily less guilty of this in my own book (Lensmire, 1994) on writing workshop approaches. I also concentrated action on charged experiences within the workshop, but I concentrated on negatively-charged ones.

12 See Au (1993) for an admirable, concise characterization of this work and what it might mean for literacy education.

13 Drawing on Foucault (1977), theorists such as Walkerdine (1990) and Hogan (1990) argue that teacher power works differently in traditional classrooms and sites such as writing workshops--a difference captured in the contrast between "sovereign" and "disciplinary" power:

> Sovereign power is negative and judicial and functions through rituals of terror and repression; disciplinary power is positive and constitutive, a "technique" that operates through highly localized political "technologies of power" based on the accumulation of knowledge of individual subjects . . . (Hogan, 1990, p. 12)

Or, as Walkerdine (1990) puts it: "not overt disciplining but covert watching" (p. 22).

That is, teacher power in progressive pedagogies is grounded in exactly the sort of surveillance suggested by "follow the child"--the teacher watches, gathers information, quietly

manipulates. As for the child:

> The child whose nature we are to monitor with our all-knowing, all-seeing gaze is to be calculatedly liberated, controlled into freedom. (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 118)

14 Graves admits that when we ask children to write out of their personal experiences, we are, as teachers, asking them "to undress." His solution to this problem? Teachers are also to undress, by sharing their writing with children (see Gilbert, 1989, p. 24). We are to ask children to undress, and say, don't worry, we'll undress too? The metaphor Graves jumps to is apt, but his response suggests how little he has considered the vulnerability of students in the face of workshop teachers' institutional authority and power.

15 Although Walkerdine has not, to my knowledge, written directly about writing workshop approaches, I don't think that she would be surprised by this relatively quiet, subdued workshop teacher. Indeed, it is what you would predict from her work. For her, progressive education is founded on images of the active child developing in a nurturing, but essentially passive, environment. Furthermore,

> The teacher is part of the environment (part of the woodwork?). She is *there*--it is her watchful and surveillant presence which facilitates the mastery and independence, the self-reliance of the child. She must know thirty children 'as individuals'. She is passive; the child is an active body. . . . She is the price paid for autonomy, its hidden and dispensable cost. (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 119)

We can see workshop advocates struggling to write the teacher out of this passive role. Calkins (1986), for example, feels the need to argue explicitly that both the student *and the teacher* should be active in the writing workshop--which, when you think of it, is a little odd. Another example is when Graves (1994), in his preface to *A fresh look at writing*, asserts that "although listening to children is still the heart" of workshop approaches, he and other workshop advocates now know that "right from the start, teachers need to teach more" (p. xvi).

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